



FINANCIAL LITERACY ACTIVITIES FOR LIBRARIES



OFFICE OF
**ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT**
Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General of Massachusetts

Massachusetts
Libraries
BOARD OF LIBRARY
COMMISSIONERS

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FORWARD

The State Treasurer's Office of Economic Empowerment (OEE) is partnering with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) to offer financial education resources to librarians for their patrons. One of the biggest needs in financial literacy is making learning engaging. This handbook aims to address ways to target children, teens, and adults with programming to boost financial literacy.

About the Office of Economic Empowerment

The [Office of Economic Empowerment \(OEE\)](#) is a department within the Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General of Massachusetts tasked with offering free and accessible financial education, promoting wage equity, and creating a bright future for children across the state.

The Office of Economic Empowerment delivers programs to all residents of Massachusetts and at every stage of their lives, regardless of their economic background. We also offer initiatives tailored to meet the unique financial experiences of veterans, women, high school students, and older adults.

About the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

The [Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners \(MBLC\)](#) is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate, and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth.

The nine commissioners set policy and conduct official business. The MBLC staff administer a wide array of statewide programs and services for libraries and residents.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

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PIGGY BANK PAGEANT

ALL AGES

Piggy banks are one of the first tools that allow children to see how putting away small amounts can add up to big savings. Have kids make their own piggy banks, or money holders, that they can use as a fun craft and a way to kickstart their savings journey.

The budget of this project can range from free to higher cost depending on your vessel. Higher budget projects can incorporate ceramic piggy banks. Here is a base level budget option.

Mason Jar Piggy Bank

Lower cost options include clean recycled jars from items such as Pringles cans, mayonnaise jars, and cans.

Supplies: Mason Jars and their caps, chalk or acrylic paint, paint brushes

Optional: painter's tape, markers, glitter

Directions:

ADULTS ONLY: Cut a slot large enough for a coin on the top of the Mason Jar. Other options include putting a piece of paper or cardboard between the ring of the jar and cutting a slot from this.

Have children paint the jars with the acrylic paint. Once the paint dries, children can decorate with markers, glitter, and other designs.

Theme ideas: "My Saving Jar", "Superhero", "Princess", "___'s Bank"



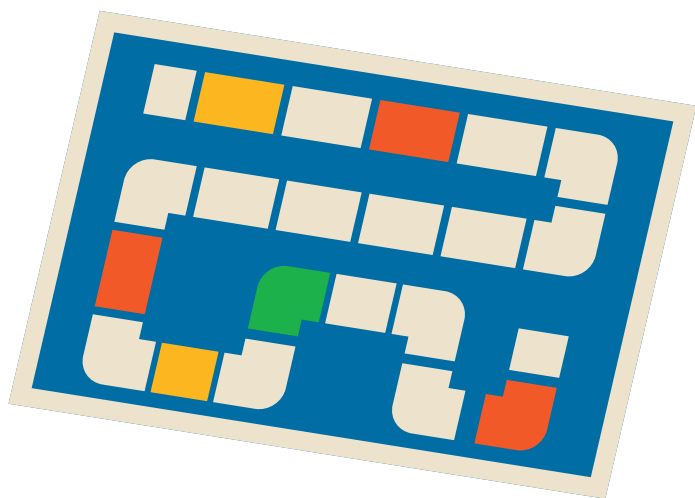
BOARD GAME DAY

AGES 8+

Playing board games is a fun way to teach children about money management, investing, and personal finance without sitting them down for a lesson. Use board games you may already have at your library or source these to start your library's collection and have a board game day all about financial literacy!

The budget of this project can range from free to higher depending on if your library has these games. Many libraries loan out board games from their Library of Things. If yours does not, board games can be purchased at general merchandise retailers, thrift stores, or you can survey your community members to see if they have games to donate.

Board game options can include Game of Life, Monopoly, PayDay, or for older kids - Catan and the Next Big Thing.



COLORING DAY

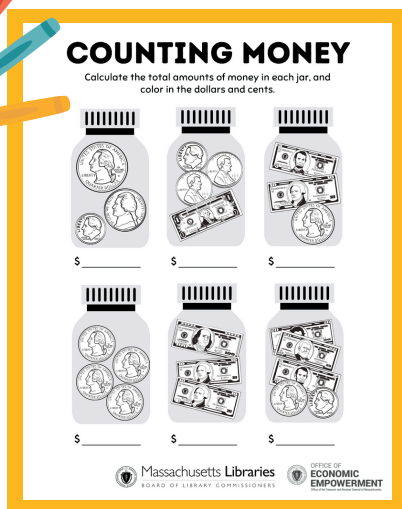
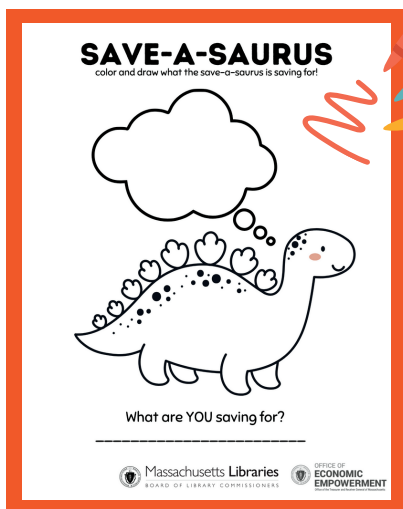
ALL AGES

Coloring is an interactive way for children to gain comprehension on big topics like budgeting, savings, and money management. Provide these pages to children and have open conversations on saving goals, counting, and the value of money.

The budget can range from free to higher based on the art supplies your library provides. Utilize your pre-existing markers, crayons, and other art supplies and provide children space to color.

Scan this QR code or visit this link to download supplies:

<https://bit.ly/LibraryColoringSheets>



MAKE SPENDING CHOICES AT THE PARK

AGES 3-5

Scan the QR code
or visit this link to
download the worksheet:
<https://bit.ly/ParkSpendingChoices>



Directions:

1. Tell children to imagine they're visiting the park in the picture on the worksheet. They'll choose how to spend or save their money on the visit.
2. Explain that buying is when you pay money and get to keep something in return. For example, you get to keep the balloons or kites in the picture when you buy them.
 - a. For younger children, you may need to explain that some items cost more than others. You can use real coins or play money to help them understand which items cost more.
3. Tell children that renting is when you pay money to borrow something. You give it back when you're finished. In the picture, you can pay money to rent the boats and fishing poles, but return them when you're done.
4. Before they make their choices, ask questions to help them think about their decisions. See the "Things to talk about" for suggestions.
5. Things to talk about:
 - o Ask what they'd like to do at the park in the picture. Where would they like to spend their money? What could they do to have fun without spending money?
 - o For older children, you may ask them to add the costs of each item they pick. You can ask, "How much money would you need to buy the items you chose?"
 - o You can also give older children a budget and let them decide how to spend their money. You can ask, "How would you spend your money at the park if I gave you \$7.50?"

Make spending choices at the park

Look at the picture. Imagine you're visiting the park in the picture.
You get to choose how to spend or save your money.



The [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\)](https://consumerfinance.gov/MoneyAsYouGrow) has great resources for the questions children may have about earning, saving, planning, and shopping.

Scan this QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/MoneySkillsCFPB> to access materials covering more topics.

LEMONADE STAND ACTIVITY

AGES 3-7

Lemonade stands are often the first time children learn about essential financial concepts like income, expenses, profit, and budgeting.

Host a lemonade stand outside your library or encourage your patrons to take these lessons to their own sidewalks. Supplement lemonade making with strong stories such as “It Began with Lemonade” by Gideon Sterer or “Lemonade in Winter: A Book About Two Kids Counting Money” by Emily Jenkins.

Budget for this activity is low cost, depending on lemonade supplies and book acquisition.



Supplies: Lemon juice, sugar, cold water, ice, pitchers, cups.

Optional: paper and craft supplies.

Directions:

1. *Optional:* Have children use paper and craft supplies to advertise their lemonade stand. Librarians can guide children on what a lemonade stand is and where to hang posters.
2. Have children make lemonade with supervision. Combine 1 ½ cups lemon juice with 5 cups of cold water and 1 ½ cups of sugar. Stir in a large pitcher until sugar is completely dissolved.
3. Set up a stand outside of your library and supervise children, making sure to discuss the importance of a business plan, profits, and fun!

PROGRAMS FOR TEENS

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WHAT'S YOUR MONEY PERSONALITY? QUIZ!

From magazines in our childhood years to fun questionnaires on news sites, everyone loves personality quizzes. Take these quizzes to think more about your relationship with money.

Knowing about your financial personality type helps you understand strengths and helps you recognize potential blind spots about how you manage your money.



The budget for this activity is free.

Share links with youths via social media, QR codes on posters near check-out or computers, or through their teachers.

Quiz Options: Scan the QR codes or visit the links to access two money personality quizzes:

- Empower's Quiz: empower.me/quiz
- Marcus' Quiz: <https://bit.ly/MarcusPersonalityQuiz>

Empower's Quiz



Marcus' Quiz



SLIME — A CRAFTING “SIDE HUSTLE”

Many youths have side hustles to help them earn extra income, develop new skills, and even become business owners. Pick up a new hobby that can fuel your passion and potentially your wallet. Learn how to make your own slime!

The budget of this activity is low cost.

Easy Slime

Supplies: White glue, water, food coloring, borax, containers or plastic bags.

Optional: glitter, foam balls, cut up rubber bands, craft paint, beads.

Directions:

1. Dissolve ½ teaspoon of borax into ½ cup of hot water and then set aside.
2. Pour one 4 oz. bottle of glue into a bowl.
3. Add ½ cup of water and food coloring, then stir.
4. Add the borax solution from step one into the bowl ½ teaspoon at a time until the glue mixture starts to thicken.
5. Knead slime with hands until no longer sticky. If your slime is still sticky, add more borax while kneading. If you add too much borax, the slime will become too stiff.



SCHOLARSHIP HUNTING POWER HOUR

College and post-high school education is fast approaching, and it can be pretty pricey. Come body-double with your peers and do some scholarship hunting with resources provided by your library.

Reserve a set of computers or area of your library dedicated to the scholarship hunters. Librarians can use the resources at bpl.org/beyond-high-school as a starting point. Peterson's Test Prep & Career Prep at galepages.com/masss can provide more help to students and your patrons to find scholarships, schools, explore a career, and more. Don't forget- anyone can use these resources at home or anywhere with internet access!

We recommend having a librarian on hand for questions on where to find scholarships, FAFSA, the Common Application, and more.

The budget of this activity is free but could be higher cost if your library provides snack incentives.



OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

Do you want to start investing? Would you like to have college savings figured out before college even starts? Are you interested in saving up for a car? The best way to do this is to open a checking or savings account and start learning money management early.



Most checking or savings accounts require a parent or guardian to be a joint member of a bank account. Minors will need to bring identification and their guardian with them. Ask your financial institution what forms they require.

Visit <https://bit.ly/FindABank> to view a list of local banks.

Visit <https://bit.ly/CreditUnionsMA> to find a list of local credit unions.

Librarians, this is an opportunity to run a virtual campaign, post flyers in your library, or host an info session urging teens to create a bank account. Reach out to financial institutions in your area for more help.

Banks



Credit Unions



ADULTING TOOLKIT

Adulting is hard. You need to know how to do your taxes, how paychecks work, how to write a check, and how to build your credit.

Set up stations in your library for teens to learn the fundamentals of each topic. Options are to have print outs or computer stations at each table. Have a librarian on hand to answer any questions, and have teens rotate stations every 15 minutes.

The budget of this activity is free.

Use these accredited tools to set up each station:

- **Taxes:** <https://bit.ly/UnderstandingTaxesIRS>
- **Paychecks:** <https://bit.ly/PaychecksCFPB>
- **Understanding Checks:** <https://bit.ly/BalancingCheckbooks>
- **Starting Your Credit History:** <https://bit.ly/CreditHistoryCFPB>



PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

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MINDFULNESS JOURNALING

Labeling emotions and acknowledging traumatic events — both natural outcomes of journaling — have a known positive effect on people. At the same time, writing is fundamentally an organizational system. When we journal, our working memory improves, since our brains are freed from the enormously taxing job of processing that experience, and we sleep better. In these sessions, adults will meet to process through writing with prompts provided.

The budget of this activity is free.

Supplies: Writing tools and paper. *Producing supplies can be avoided by encouraging adults to bring their own notebooks and writing tools, or strictly hosting this virtually.*

Directions: If in person, host this session in a dedicated section of the library and have a librarian lead the discussion. If virtual, have an open virtual meeting space with a librarian dispersing prompts.



Mindfulness Journaling Prompts

1. Financial Stress:

- Identify moments that make you feel stressed about your finances. Why do these stress you out? What are ways you de-stress when dealing with these thoughts?

2. Stress Before Bed:

- Describe how you incorporate stress relievers into your nightly routine. What are the hardest parts of de-stressing before bed? What are the best parts of your routine?

3. Healthy Financial Habits:

- Think of your character strengths and mindset. What is one way your positive attributes push you towards achieving your financial goals?

4. Hard Conversations:

- Who do you discuss your finances with? In what way do they calm you down?

5. Being Thankful:

- Think of a time when you were in a tough situation financially but received assistance. How did their help affect you?

6. Positivity and Growth:

- Reflect on how you can be more compassionate towards yourself in times of financial stress. How can you accomplish the first steps this week?

7. Additional Journaling:

- Free journal about any topic



BUDGET BITES

Eating healthy and managing a tight grocery budget is easy with planning, savvy shopping, and tasty recipes.

Use a display of budget-forward cookbooks and recipes in your library to inspire adults to make healthy meals without breaking the bank.

The budget for this activity is free.

Program Options:

- Host a Cookbook Club. Showcase one or more cookbooks and have members cook meals, share food, and discuss with others. Options include hosting in-person meals for dinner or routinely over Zoom.
- Host a virtual campaign that encourages adults to cook budget-friendly meals or share their favorite recipes. Share a hashtag (#budgetbites) and have your library post recipes from budget-friendly cookbooks in their library.



CANDLES – A CRAFTING “SIDE HUSTLE”

These days, lots of people have a side hustle to help them earn extra income. By dedicating time to a hobby, some even go on to become business owners and quit their day job. Candle-making is only one of many skills people can leave their local libraries with to fuel their passion and possibly their wallet.

The budget of this activity is medium to higher cost.

Supplies: Jars, wick set, soy or beeswax, popsicle sticks, and scissors

Optional: *Essential oils, dye, stickers*



Directions:

1. Prepare your vessels. Take your wick kit and place the wick into your vessel. Vessels could be empty yogurt jars, empty candle containers, or other strong glass options.

2. Heat the wax. For a microwave, add in a desired amount of wax and microwave in 30 second increments until fully melted. Use the popsicle sticks to stir the hot wax.

For a hot plate or stove, add in the wax and allow it to melt while stirring consistently.

3. If using a fragrance or dye, add these once the wax has come off the heat but before transferring to your jar. It is recommended to use around 30 drops of essential oils to start for a single eight-ounce candle.

4. Transfer the wax by carefully pouring hot wax into a container. Use popsicle sticks to help keep the wick in place. You can also use popsicle sticks with a hole cut in the middle to keep the wick straight.

5. Once wax is completely cool, trim the wick and display your new candle!

SCAM AND FRAUD PREVENTION

Scammers use lots of different tactics — stories about grandchildren in distress, million-dollar prizes, a romantic future, or a business deal — to try to steal people's money. Come join your fellow older adults to complete fun worksheets about common scams and reduce stigma by talking about shared experiences!



The budget of this activity is free to low cost, depending on snack incentives.

Supplies: Free worksheets from CFPB or FTC. *Allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery.*

CFPB Materials: <https://bit.ly/FraudPreventionCFPB>

FTC Materials: www.bulkorder.ftc.gov/publications

Directions:

Allow older adults a space to get together and talk. This could be a designated table of the library. The stigma around being a victim of scams discourages older adults from talking about what happened to them, which in turn creates a vicious cycle. Use the scam and fraud prevention word games as a starting point to bring the older adult community together and prevent future scams.

CFPB Materials



FTC Materials



MAKE YOUR OWN BOOK NOOK!

A book nook, or bookshelf insert, is a gateway to another world without leaving your bookshelf! This diorama is inserted between your books to give the illusion that there is a secret scene behind your shelves. Home décor and book nooks can get expensive, so save some money by making your own!

Librarians can also host a book nook contest or display book nooks created on their shelves.

The budget of this activity is low to mid cost.

Supplies: Cardboard or shoe box, popsicle sticks, glue, craft/scrap paper, scissors, paint and brushes

Optional: *Use plywood instead of cardboard.*

Utilize leftover supplies from your children's crafts. Animal figures, fake vegetation and flowers, egg cartons, scraps of funky colored cloth or paper.

Directions: *This craft is not one size fits all - each nook can be different!*

1. Cut pieces of cardboard to make a rectangle. Ensure the two sides of the nook are the same size and that the floor and ceiling are the same size.
2. Paint or decorate the inside of your book nook to make it look like your favorite scene of your favorite book. Options include a mysterious jungle, a paved street with shops, or a mini library itself! Use popsicle sticks and pieces of paper to create a fake bookshelf.
3. Glue each "wall" while decorating and place the roof on last.



ACCESS TOOLS AND ORDER RESOURCES FOR YOUR PATRONS!

Supplement each of these activities with free materials aimed towards boosting financial education!

Remind your patrons that Massachusetts residents have free access to newspapers, legal documents, and more databases via MBLC.

Visit www.galepages.com/masss.

Use the tools created just for librarians to hand out bookmarks, create social media posts, and make crafted reading lists.

Organizations can order free financial literacy materials in bulk directly to their location. Visit the Clearinghouse for OEE specific resources, or visit the Awarehouse for materials created for the MBLC+OEE partnership and for other materials.

Visit Mass.gov/FinLitToolkit for a ready-to-use social media calendar for libraries!

OEE Clearinghouse: <https://bit.ly/OEEPromoltems>

MBLC Awarehouse: <https://bit.ly/FinLitMBLC>

OEE Materials



MBLC Materials



Here are three examples of the bookmarks you can order directly to your library through mbc.libwizard.com/f/finlit-bookmarks



The Office of Economic Empowerment also provides free financial education workshops. Topics include money management, fraud and scam prevention, banking, credit, savings, financial recovery, and more! If you are interested in coordinating a workshop with OEE, please reach out to empowerment@tre.state.ma.us.

If you or your patrons liked the content in this handbook, please let us know!

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CONTACT US!

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to reach out to our offices for future collaborations. Follow us on social media for timely updates!

Contact the Office of Economic Empowerment



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THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE